IN THE HIGH COURT OF KERALA AT ERNAKULAM

PRESENT :

THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE R.BASANT

FRIDAY, THE 22ND JUNE 2007 / 1ST ASHADHA 1929

WP(C).No. 9463 of 2006(B)

PETITIONER:

SUMESH LAL, S/O. SURENDRAN,
LICENSEE OF TODDY SHOP NO.3 (AYANIMOODU SHOP),
NEYYATTINKARA RANGES, RESIDING AT THEKKETHIL
VEEDU, KEEZHUTHONNAKKAL, POTHENCODE,
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM.

BY ADV. SRI.K.B.PRADEEP

RESPONDENTS:

1. THE STATE OF KERALA, REPRESENTED BY
THE PUBLIC PROSECUTOR, HIGH COURT OF KERALA,
ERNAKULAM.

2. THE CIRCLE INSPECTOR OF EXCISE,
NEYYATTINKARA RANGE.

BY GOVERNMENT PLEADER SRI.GIKKU JACOB

THIS WRIT PETITION (CIVIL) HAVING BEEN FINALLY HEARD ON 22/06/2007, ALONG WITH CRL.M.C.NO.188/2007 THE COURT ON THE SAME DAY DELIVERED THE FOLLOWING:

R.BASANT, J.

W.P.C.No.9463 of 2006 and Crl.M.C.No.188 of 2007

Dated this the 22nd day of June 2007

O R D E R

The petitioners have come before this Court aggrieved by the registration of crimes against them under Sections 57(a) and 56(b) of the Kerala Abkari Act. The crux of the allegations raised against the petitioner is that in the toddy samples which was taken from their premises, starch was found to be present, that is, the test of starch was found to be answered positively. The petitioners pray that the proceedings against them may be quashed inasmuch as the presence of starch cannot attract any offence under Section 57(a) of the Kerala Abkari Act as held in Balu vs. State of Kerala 2007(1) KLT 401]. Consequent allegations under Section 56(b) may also be quashed, it is submitted.

2. The learned Public Prosecutor, after taking instructions, submits that the State does not want to press the charge under Section 57(a) of the Kerala Abkari Act and is now limiting the allegation to the offence under Section 56(b) of the

Kerala Abkari Act. Presence of starch is objectionable, contends the learned Public Prosecutor on the ground that starch, which is not an ingredient of genuine toddy, was found to be present. This amounts to violation of the conditions of licence, rules and consequently amounts to infraction of Section 56(b) of the Kerala Abkari act, urges the learned Public Prosecutor. The learned Public Prosecutor submits that the State does not want to press the charge under Section 57(a) of the Kerala Abkari Act but wants to press the charge under Section 56(b) on the sole ground that the toddy kept for sale was found to contain starch which is not an ingredient of genuine toddy. Inasmuch as only genuine toddy is expected to be sold, the petitioner has committed the offence under Section 56(b), it is contended. Necessary instructions have been issued to all the officials not to press the charge under Section 57(a) and to press the charge only under Section 56(b) in all such cases, it is submitted.

3. The learned counsel for the petitioners submits that in that event, the submissions of the learned Public Prosecutor may be quashed taken note of and recorded. The proceedings initiated and the cognizance taken in so far as it relates to the allegation under Section 57(a) of the Kerala Abkari Act may be

and proceedings may be permitted to continue on the specific understanding that the allegation that the petitioners have to face as pressed by the prosecution now is only the one under Section 56(b) of the Kerala Abkari Act.

4. I am, in these circumstances, satisfied that the said request can be accepted and these petitions can be disposed of. These petitions are accordingly allowed in part accepting the submissions of the learned Public Prosecutor and as agreed by the learned counsel for the petitioners. The prosecution shall stand quashed inasmuch as the allegation under Section 57(a) is concerned. But the courts shall consider whether the allegations raised reveal offences punishable under Section 56(b) of the Kerala Abkari Act.

5. These petitions are accordingly allowed to the extent indicated above.

(R.BASANT, JUDGE)

jsr

// True Copy// PA to Judge

R.BASANT, J.

CRL.M.CNo.

ORDER

21ST DAY OF MAY2007